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(54) Wireless subscriber terminal programming using a broadcast control channel

(57) The invention is a system for programming wireless subscriber terminals (WST's) using a broadcast channel of a wireless communication system. A control program, for controlling operation of the WST, is updated using a series of messages transmitted from a base station over a broadcast control channel to one or more WST's simultaneously. Each message in the series contains a segment of the control program, and the series of messages is interleaved with other control data on the broadcast control channel in order to avoid inter-

ference with other call activities. When a WST identifies a message as containing a control program segment, the WST stores the segment. Once a complete control program has been received, control of the WST can be transferred to the new control program. Receipt of the broadcast transmission is subject to interruption for a variety of reasons, e.g., a WST is powered off, a WST moves outside the range of a base station, other radio signals or noise interfere with the broadcast signal, or a call is received by a WST, which then transfers to a voice channel.

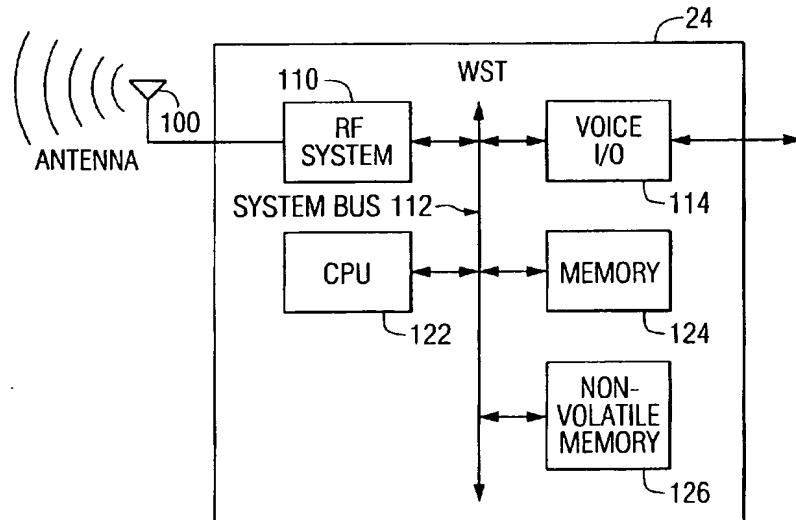


FIG. 3

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Description

[0001] The invention relates to wireless systems, and more particularly to the reprogramming of wireless subscriber terminals in a wireless system using a broadcast control channel.

[0002] A wireless subscriber terminal ("WST"), also known as a "subscriber" or a "mobile unit," is any mobile or fixed station providing a subscriber's point of interface to a wireless system, typically a cellular or wireless local loop system. WST's within the wireless system communicate with a base station, which manages calls across an air interface by subdividing the available spectrum into a number of voice channels and control channels. The voice channels carry voice signals and other data. The control channels carry information needed to manage the voice channels. Broadcast control channels are used to simultaneously transmit information to all of the terminals within range of a base station, as distinguished from other voice/control channels that operate on a point-to-point basis. The present invention relates to a system for programming WST's over a wireless system using a broadcast control channel.

[0003] As telephony techniques have advanced, WST's have become increasingly sophisticated. In addition to radio frequency modulation/demodulation circuitry for transmitting and receiving signals over a wireless channel, WST's typically include signal processing for transforming audio information between analog and digital representations. A microprocessor or microcontroller is also included, both for controlling the voice channel hardware and for providing higher level functions accessible to a WST user. These higher level functions, or "features," include those functions familiar to the typical cellular phone user, such as a call-in-absence indicator, theft alarm, call restrictions, hands-free operation, and handset attributes such as a phone number, security code, and ringer/alert capability.

[0004] The microprocessor/microcontroller requires its own software to control initialization of the hardware when the WST is turned on, and to control operation of the WST while it remains on. This software, referred to here as a control program, is stored in a non-volatile memory so that it remains intact until actively erased. Ordinarily, the control program is installed by the WST manufacturer before delivery. The non-volatile memory also typically contains programmable data relating to the identity of the particular WST and the feature settings for the WST. This programmable data is ordinarily entered by a technician prior to delivery to an end user.

[0005] The configuration options for WST features can also be programmed remotely. One approach is disclosed in the specification of U.S. Patent No. 5,109,403, in which features are activated over a voice channel using tones. In another approach, control channels are used to update WST features. While improving the versatility of wireless systems, these approaches are constrained to setting feature switches, which are then in-

terpreted by the control program to provide features to a WST user. They do not permit replacement of the control program itself.

[0006] As control programs and available features change with the passage of time, it is sometimes desirable to update the entire control program associated with a WST, as distinguished from pre-defined features. One method of updating control programs is disclosed in the specification of U.S. Patent No. 5,430,877. This approach uses a physical connection to update software. Another approach to reprogramming is disclosed in the specification of U.S. Patent No. 5,666,293.

[0007] There remains a need for a system to program WST's, i.e., suitable to wireless telephony, that permits complete flexibility in WST programming/ reprogramming from a remote program database.

[0008] The present invention includes a method for programming wireless subscriber terminals in a wireless system, the wireless system having a base station in wireless communication with the wireless subscriber terminals using one or more control channels and multiple traffic channels, and each wireless subscriber terminal having a memory, a non-volatile memory, a processor, and an original control program running on the processor to control operation of the wireless subscriber terminal, characterized by the steps of:

- 30 A. initializing one or more participating wireless subscriber terminals from the base station, using a control channel, to receive a complete program over a selected control channel;
- 35 B. transmitting a complete program from the base station using the selected control channel, the complete program comprising a plurality of program segments communicated to the wireless subscriber terminals in separate messages;
- 40 C. verifying that each participating wireless subscriber terminal has received the complete program;
- 45 D. storing the complete program in the non-volatile memory of each participating wireless subscriber terminal as a new control program; and

E. transferring control of each participating wireless subscriber terminal to the new control program.

[0009] The invention also includes a system for programming wireless subscriber terminals, the system comprising:

- 50 a base station, the base station having a memory; a control program stored in the memory of the base station;
- 55 one or more wireless subscriber terminals in wireless communication with the base station over an air interface, the air interface comprising a plurality of traffic channels and a plurality of control channels;

means for initializing the one or more wireless sub-

scriber terminals, using the control channels, to receive the control program; means for broadcasting the control program to the one or more wireless subscriber terminals; means for verifying that each initialized wireless subscriber terminal has received the control program; and means for transferring control of each initialized wireless subscriber terminal to the control program.

[0010] Conveniently, the control program in a wireless subscriber terminal is updated by means of control channel transmissions from a base station. The control program is transmitted as a series of messages containing program segments, interleaved with other messages on a broadcast control channel. When a WST identifies a message as belonging to a control program applicable to the WST, the WST stores the program segment contained in the message.

[0011] Reception of the broadcast control channel by a WST can be interrupted by, for example, radio interference, powering down, or movement of a WST beyond the range of a base station. Further, the WST must drop the broadcast control channel and switch to a different physical channel for voice/data traffic. Thus the WST is not always in a condition to receive program messages. To address this problem, the base station arbitrates the transmission of unreceived program segments by polling individual WST's participating in the control program broadcast and retransmitting program segments missed by any of the WST's.

[0012] The system preferably provides non-volatile storage of partial programs in each WST so that a WST need not receive an entire program in a single session.

[0013] Thus the invention advantageously accomplishes remote WST reprogramming in a manner that avoids use of the voice channels, and in a manner that does not require a continuous, uninterrupted connection to the broadcast control channel.

[0014] The invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a wireless communication system;

Fig. 2 is a block diagram of a base station;

Fig. 3 is a block diagram of a wireless subscriber terminal; and

Fig. 4 is a diagram of the message formats used in the invention.

Fig. 5 is a data flow chart showing the flow of data between a base station and wireless subscriber terminals.

[0015] Figure 1 depicts a wireless communication system 10 according to the present invention, in which a base station 20 is in two-way wireless communication with wireless subscriber terminals (WST's) 24, and in

further two-way communication with a landline system 25 via a trunk 26. The landline system 25 may be the public switched telephone network (PSTN), or any other wired network capable of voice/ data connections. If an active call is present on the trunk 26, the base station 20 translates the forward trunk signal to a properly formatted radio signal which is radiated by an antenna 27 to a WST 24 over the air interface 30. The WST 24 performs complementary operations to establish two-way voice connections over the air interface 30.

[0016] The term "trunk," as used herein, refers to a conventional connection to a PSTN for carrying a plurality of telephone signals, and is further intended to include a plurality of such trunks, an individual subscriber line, or any other connection to a landline system 25.

[0017] The terms such as "voice channel" and "voice traffic", as used herein, are intended to include the communication of conventional audio signals, as well as data, such as facsimile or computer data, that might be carried by a telephone system 25.

[0018] The present invention includes an air interface 30 having at least one control channel, distinct from the voice channels, which can provide broadcast communication to numerous WST's 24, along with bi-directional control communication between individual WST's 24 and the base station 20. The present invention is to be used primarily with a wireless local loop installed as an alternative to a landline, the communication system 10 may also be a cellular or macro/micro-cellular system 30 designed for mobile telephony and that certain adaptations may be made for such cellular applications.

[0019] The invention will be used with more, emerging standards such as GSM, PCS, and third generation standards derived from the IMT-2000 program. The following embodiment of the invention uses the digital sector of the air interface 30 described by the Telecommunications Industry Association's IS-136 specification (IS-136). Briefly stated, the digital sector of IS-136 is a digital, time division multiple access (TDMA) technology operating on 800 MHz and 1900 MHz.

[0020] As shown in Fig. 1, the IS-136 air interface 30 includes digital traffic channels 32 which are two-way links for voice traffic. The air interface 30 also includes a digital control channel (DCCH) 34 having (logical) broadcast control channels for broadcasting information from the base station 20 to numerous WST's. The DCCH 34 also includes several (logical) point-to-point control channels for direct, two-way control communication between each WST 24 and the base station 20. This combination of control channels can be advantageously employed to effectively transmit an entire control program to several participating WST's 24 while conserving the typically limited digital traffic channels 32 for voice traffic between the landline system 25 and the WST's 24.

[0021] As shown in Fig. 2, the base station 20 provides an interface between the landline system 25 and the WST's 24. In order to function in this capacity, the

base station 20 includes a MUX/switch 50 on one hand to transmit and receive wired network voice traffic, and a radio frequency (RF) system 60 connected to the antenna 27 on the other hand to transmit and receive wireless voice traffic across the air interface 30. A wireless access controller (WAC) 70 manages the operations of the RF system 60 and the MUX/switch 50 to ensure that each wired voice connection is coupled to the correct channel of the air interface 30. The WAC 70 also performs functions related to voice encoding, compression, encryption, and security.

[0022] With respect to the present invention, the WAC 70 performs several specific functions. First the WAC 70 manages the transmission of a control program over the broadcast control channel. The control program is stored in a memory 80 in the base station 20. In order to transmit the control program to the WST's 24, the WAC 70 divides the control program into program segments which can be interleaved with other broadcast control channel transmissions, i.e., transmitted between other control messages so as to avoid interfering with ordinary operations of the wireless system 10. When it is desired to update the control program for the WST's that is stored in the memory 80 of the base station 20, for example, over the landline system 25, the wireless access controller 70 also manages the receipt of the control program over a trunk 26 and storage of the control program in the memory 80.

[0023] As shown in Fig. 3, a WST 24 transmits and receives signals through the air interface 30 using an antenna 100 coupled to an RF system 110. The demodulated voice signal, or some encoded representation thereof, is carried on a system bus 112 to a voice signal port 114. In the preferred wireless local loop embodiment, the voice signal port 114 is a modular jack compatible with standard local loop telephone cords, along with any appropriate conversion circuitry. The WST 24 also includes a processor 122 connected to the system bus 112 for controlling operation of the WST 24, as well as a memory 124 for temporary storage and a non-volatile memory 126 for storage of a WST control program.

[0024] The control program consists of a series of instructions which the processor 122 can execute to control operation of the WST 24. The term "firmware", as used in the following discussion, is intended to refer to an executable firmware image for use with a microcontroller, as well as any other executable code, instructions, or other software that might be used as a control program for a WST 24. Reprogramming the WST 24 with a new control program comprises four general steps: (1) initialization, (2) program broadcast, (3) verification, and (4) switch-over. These steps are now described in detail.

1. Initialization:

[0025] Before broadcast transmission of a new control program, the base station 20 directly initializes each

WST 24 by sending each WST 24 a *broadcast firmware start (BFS)* message 150 over a forward point-to-point control channel. Figure 4 shows the format of the BFS message 150, which is used by each WST 24 to determine whether it should participate in the upcoming control program broadcast. The *BFS* message 150 includes a hardware model number 152, a hardware version number 154, a firmware version number 156 for the particular control program, and a feature set identifier 158.

5 5 Each WST 24 compares this information with stored information to determine whether it should receive the impending control program broadcast.

[0026] The *BFS* message 150 also includes information which participating WST's 24 use to handle the subsequent broadcast messages containing the new control program. A transfer identifier 160 uniquely identifies the control program broadcast. The same identification number is also included in all of the broadcast messages containing the new control program so that each WST

10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145 150 155 160 165 170 175 180 185 190 195 200 205 210 215 220 225 230 235 240 245 250 255 260 265 270 275 280 285 290 295 300 305 310 315 320 325 330 335 340 345 350 355 360 365 370 375 380 385 390 395 400 405 410 415 420 425 430 435 440 445 450 455 460 465 470 475 480

[0027] The *BFS* message 150 also includes information which participating WST's 24 use to handle the subsequent broadcast messages containing the new control program. A transfer identifier 160 uniquely identifies the control program broadcast. The same identification number is also included in all of the broadcast messages containing the new control program so that each WST

20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145 150 155 160 165 170 175 180 185 190 195 200 205 210 215 220 225 230 235 240 245 250 255 260 265 270 275 280 285 290 295 300 305 310 315 320 325 330 335 340 345 350 355 360 365 370 375 380 385 390 395 400 405 410 415 420 425 430 435 440 445 450 455 460 465 470 475 480

[0028] Each WST 24 receiving the *BFS* message 150 replies with its own *BFS response (BFSR)* message 180. This is a simple two-part message transmitted over a reverse control channel. The *BFSR* message 180 includes the transfer identifier 160 from the *BFS* message

30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145 150 155 160 165 170 175 180 185 190 195 200 205 210 215 220 225 230 235 240 245 250 255 260 265 270 275 280 285 290 295 300 305 310 315 320 325 330 335 340 345 350 355 360 365 370 375 380 385 390 395 400 405 410 415 420 425 430 435 440 445 450 455 460 465 470 475 480

[0029] The base station 20 receives a *BFSR* message 180 from each WST 24. This information is stored in the memory 80 of the base station 20 for use during the reprogramming. At this point, initialization is complete and the base station 20 may initiate a control program broadcast.

2. Control Program Broadcast:

50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145 150 155 160 165 170 175 180 185 190 195 200 205 210 215 220 225 230 235 240 245 250 255 260 265 270 275 280 285 290 295 300 305 310 315 320 325 330 335 340 345 350 355 360 365 370 375 380 385 390 395 400 405 410 415 420 425 430 435 440 445 450 455 460 465 470 475 480

[0030] The base station 20 transmits segments of the new control program using *broadcast firmware block (BFB)* messages 190 transmitted over a broadcast channel. Each BFB message 190 has three parts. The transfer identifier 160 is again used to uniquely identify the control program broadcast. A block number 194 is included to allow for proper sequencing of control pro-

gram blocks. And, of course, the firmware block 196 itself is included in the *BFB* message 190. The length of the firmware block 196 is specified in the (previously transmitted) *BFS* message 150. The *BFB* messages 190 are interleaved with other broadcast channel transmissions within a logical channel so as to permit other broadcast channel traffic required for normal operation of the wireless communication system 10.

[0031] The base station 20 continues broadcasting *BFB* messages 190 until it has transmitted a complete control program. If the broadcast channel was an error free, uninterrupted communication medium, this would conclude the firmware transfer. However, there is no guarantee that every *BFB* message 190 reaches every participating WST 24. Any number of events may cause a WST 24 to miss *BFB* messages 190, including a user powering off the WST 24, interference in the air interface, equipment failure, or the WST 24 switching to a digital traffic channel 32 for normal call activities. Thus the wireless system proceeds to verify the control program broadcast.

3. Verification:

[0032] In order to verify the firmware broadcast, the base station 20 polls all of the participating WST's 24 using *broadcast firmware status request (BFSReq)* messages 200, transmitted over one or more forward point-to-point control channels. Each *BFSReq* message 200 includes no message other than its own request for status information.

[0033] Each WST 24 responds to the *BFSReq* message 200 using a *broadcast firmware status (BFStat)* message 210, transmitted to the base station 20 over a reverse control channel. The *BFStat* message 210 includes a status code 212 indicating the status of the received control program, e.g., transfer incomplete, transfer complete, transfer and switch-over complete. The status code 212 may also contain information available from WST 24 self-tests, such as a hardware failure or unsuccessful switch-over while attempting to use the new control program. These self-tests are described below in reference to the switch-over to a new control program, but they may be conducted before or after the WST 24 receives a *BFSReq* message 200.

[0034] As with the other messages, the *BFStat* message 210 includes the transfer identifier 160. Using a blocks received field 216 in the *BFStat* message 210, the WST 24 also informs the base station 20 of the number of blocks successfully received. Finally, the *BFStat* message 210 includes a missing block mask 218 for identifying those blocks which have not been received. The missing block mask 218 is a multi-bit mask in which each bit represents a series of control program blocks. In a preferred embodiment, the mask is 64 bits long and each bit is mapped to a sequential, integer number of blocks representing approximately one sixty-fourth of the entire block range. By coding and decoding

the missing blocks in this manner with a predetermined formula, each WST 24 can quickly and efficiently inform the base station 20 of block ranges in which there are blocks missing.

[0035] At this point, the base station 20 retransmits any missing control program blocks. The collective *BFStat* messages 210 received by the base station 20 provide a complete picture of which blocks are missing from which WST's 24 within the wireless system 10. In order to fill these gaps, the base station 20 may employ a number of strategies. The base station 20 may simply re-broadcast a complete set of missing blocks, or the base station 20 may individually transmit blocks to each WST 24 using forward point-to-point control channels. Where a single WST 24 has missed a significant number of blocks, it may even be desirable to transmit a set of missing blocks using a (higher data rate) digital traffic channel. Alternatively, the base station 20 may analyze the distribution and symmetry of missing blocks to select some mix of these two strategies which optimizes air interface traffic and/or speed. Any methodology can be employed, provided each participating WST 24 has a complete control program prior to switch-over.

25 4. Switch-over:

[0036] The final message type of the reprogramming protocol is a *firmware switch-over message* 220, transmitted from the base station 20 to a WST 24 using a forward point-to-point channel. Upon receipt of the *firmware switch-over message* 220, the WST 24 stores the complete new control program in non-volatile memory 126 and transfers control to the new control program. Optionally, the switch-over may be automatic, as when the automatic switch-over flag 164 is set in the initial *BFS* message 150.

[0037] The old control program is retained after the switch-over. When the WST 24 first transfers control to the new control program, a series of internal verification tests are performed to ensure that the new control program is operating correctly. This includes conventional power-on self tests of memory 124 and system bus 112 input/outputs. Each item of hardware used by the control program, e.g., the RF unit 110, is also tested to ensure that it is present and responding to the processor 122. If the power-on tests are successfully completed, the WST 24 then attempts to access the broadcast control channel used by the base station 20, using the new control program. If any of these tests are failed, the new control program is rejected and the WST 24 restores the old control program. If all of these tests are successfully completed, the new control program is marked as "accepted" (so that subsequent WST power-on's do not result in an inappropriate rejection of the new control program), and control of the WST 24 is unconditionally transferred to the new control program.

[0038] Figure 5 shows the flow of data according to the programming method described above. The base

station 20 and each WST 24 are shown as vertical lines. The horizontal lines indicate data flow between the base station 20 and each WST 24, with arrows indicating the direction of data flow. The initialization 240 comprises a *BFS* message 150 transmitted from the base station 20 to each WST 24 on a point-to-point basis. Once each participating WST 24 has responded with a *BFSR* message 180, the base station performs a control program broadcast 250 by broadcasting the *BFB* messages 190 containing control program blocks. It will be noted that each *BFB* message 190 is a single broadcast transmission to all of the participating WST's 24. After all of the *BFB* messages 190 have been transmitted, The base station 20 performs a verification 260 of the broadcast. This comprises *BFSReq* messages 200 from the base station 20 to each WST 24 on a point-to-point channel, and a responsive *BFStat* message 210 from each WST 24 to the base station 20. Where firmware switch-over is controlled from the base station 20, a final switch-over step 270 is performed by a *Firmware Switch-Over* message 220 from the base station 20 to each participating WST 24.

[0039] A number of variations to this reprogramming system are possible once the basic update system is in place. Each WST 24 may store multiple control programs for use at different times, with the base station 20 controlling each switch-over as needed. Further, the reprogramming system may be used to provide software patches, that is, individual blocks of a control program may be replaced without replacing the entire image.

[0040] The invention is a system for programming wireless subscriber terminals (WST's) using a broadcast channel of a wireless communication system. A control program, for controlling operation of the WST, is updated using a series of messages transmitted from a base station over a broadcast control channel to one or more WST's simultaneously. Each message in the series contains a segment of the control program, and the series of messages is interleaved with other control data on the broadcast control channel in order to avoid interference with other call activities. When a WST identifies a message as containing a control program segment, the WST stores the segment. Once a complete control program has been received, control of the WST can be transferred to the new control program. Receipt of the broadcast transmission is subject to interruption for a variety of reasons, e.g., a WST is powered off, a WST moves outside the range of a base station, other radio signals or noise interfere with the broadcast signal, or a call is received by a WST, which then transfers to a voice channel.

Claims

1. A method for programming wireless subscriber terminals in a wireless system, the wireless system

having a base station in wireless communication with the wireless subscriber terminals using one or more control channels and multiple traffic channels, and each wireless subscriber terminal having a memory, a non-volatile memory, a processor, and an original control program running on the processor to control operation of the wireless subscriber terminal, characterized by the steps of:

- A. initializing one or more participating wireless subscriber terminals from the base station, using a control channel, to receive a complete program over a selected control channel;
- B. transmitting a complete program from the base station using the selected control channel, the complete program comprising a plurality of program segments communicated to the wireless subscriber terminals in separate messages;
- C. verifying that each participating wireless subscriber terminal has received the complete program;
- D. storing the complete program in the non-volatile memory of each participating wireless subscriber terminal as a new control program; and
- E. transferring control of each participating wireless subscriber terminal to the new control program.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized by the step of verifying including the steps of polling each participating wireless subscriber terminal, using one or more control channels, to determine whether any participating wireless subscriber terminals have not received any program segments; retransmitting from the base station the program segments that any participating wireless subscriber terminals have not received, the unreceived program segments are retransmitted over one or more point-to-point control channels, and the unreceived program segments are retransmitted over one or more broadcast control channels, or retransmitted over one or more traffic channels.
3. A method as claimed in claim 1, characterized by the step of verifying comprises the step of performing a series of diagnostic tests at each participating wireless subscriber terminal to determine the validity of the new control program received at that wireless subscriber terminal, and including the step of storing each program segment received by the wireless subscriber terminal in the non-volatile memory of the wireless subscriber terminal, so that the wireless subscriber terminal retains all received program segments if reception of program segments by the wireless subscriber terminal is interrupted

4. A method as claimed in claim 1 characterized by the step of storing the original control program in non-volatile memory after transferring control of the processor to the new control program.

5. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 characterized by the control program and the new control program each comprise a software patch for controlling less than all of the operations of the wireless subscriber terminal, and preferably the wireless subscriber terminal is a cellular phone.

6. A method as claimed in claim 5 characterized by the wireless subscriber terminal is a terminal of a wireless local loop, and the step of transferring control to the new control program is forced by the base station during the step of initializing each wireless subscriber terminal.

7. A system for programming wireless subscriber terminals, the system comprising:

a base station, the base station having a memory;

a control program stored in the memory of the base station;

one or more wireless subscriber terminals in wireless communication with the base station over an air interface, the air interface comprising a plurality of traffic channels and a plurality of control channels;

means for initializing the one or more wireless subscriber terminals, using the control channels, to receive the control program;

means for broadcasting the control program to the one or more wireless subscriber terminals;

means for verifying that each initialized wireless subscriber terminal has received the control program; and

means for transferring control of each initialized wireless subscriber terminal to the control program.

8. A system as claimed in claim 7, characterized in that the one or more wireless subscriber terminals comprise cellular phone handsets, and preferably the one or more wireless subscriber terminals comprise wireless local loop terminals.

9. A base station for programming one or more wireless subscriber terminals in a wireless system, the base station comprising a memory, a control program stored in the memory as one or more program segments, a transmitter for transmitting forward messages to wireless subscriber terminals over an air interface, the forward messages including the one or more program segments stored in the memory, a receiver for receiving reverse messages from

wireless subscriber terminals over the air interface, a processor connected to the memory, the transmitter, and the receiver for controlling operation of the base station, the forward messages including broadcast firmware start messages and the reverse messages including broadcast firmware start response messages.

5 10. A base station as claimed in claim 9 characterized in that the forward messages including broadcast firmware status request messages and the reverse messages including broadcast firmware status messages.

15 11. A method for operating a base station to program one or more wireless subscriber terminals in a wireless system, the method comprising the steps of:

A. initializing a plurality of wireless subscriber terminals, using a control channel, to receive a control program;

B. broadcasting the control program to the plurality of wireless subscriber terminals;

C. verifying that each one of the plurality of wireless subscriber terminals has received the control program;

D. transferring control of each one of the plurality of wireless subscriber terminals to the control program; and

E. transmitting a broadcast firmware start message to each wireless subscriber terminal over one or more forward channels and receiving a broadcast firmware start response message from one or more participating wireless subscriber terminals over one or more reverse channels.

20 30 35 40 45 50 55 12. A method as claimed in claim 11 characterized by the step of broadcasting including the step of transmitting one or more broadcast firmware block messages over a broadcast channel, and transmitting a broadcast firmware status request message to one or more participating wireless subscriber terminal over one or more forward channels, receiving a broadcast firmware status message from one or more of the one or more participating wireless subscriber terminals, and retransmitting any missing program segments to the one or more participating wireless subscriber terminals.

13. A wireless subscriber terminal for use in a wireless system, the terminal comprising a memory, a transmitter for transmitting reverse messages from the terminal over an air interface, a receiver for receiving forward messages from a base station, the forward messages including the one or more program segments, a processor connected to the memory, the transmitter, and the receiver for controlling the

terminal, and for storing the one or more program segments in the memory, in which the forward messages include broadcast firmware start messages and the reverse messages include broadcast firmware start response messages, and the forward 5 messages also include broadcast firmware status request messages and the reverse messages include broadcast firmware status messages, with the forward messages include firmware switch-over messages, and the forward messages including the 10 one or more program segments are broadcast messages.

14. A method for operating a wireless subscriber terminal in a wireless system to receive a control program, the method comprising the steps of initializing a terminal, using a control channel, to receive a control program, the control program comprising a plurality of control program segments, receiving a broadcast comprising the plurality of control program segments, verifying that the terminal has received all of the control program segments, transferring control of the terminal to the control program, including the step of initializing further comprising the steps of receiving a broadcast firmware start message over a forward channels and transmitting a broadcast firmware start response message over a reverse channel, the step of receiving a broadcasting further comprising the step of receiving a plurality of firmware block messages over a broadcast channel, the step of verifying including the steps of, receiving a broadcast firmware status request message over a forward channels, transmitting a broadcast firmware status message over a reverse channel, the broadcast firmware status message identifying any missing control program segments, receiving any missing control program segments identified in the broadcast firmware status message, and the step of transferring control further comprising the step of receiving a firmware 40 switch-over message.

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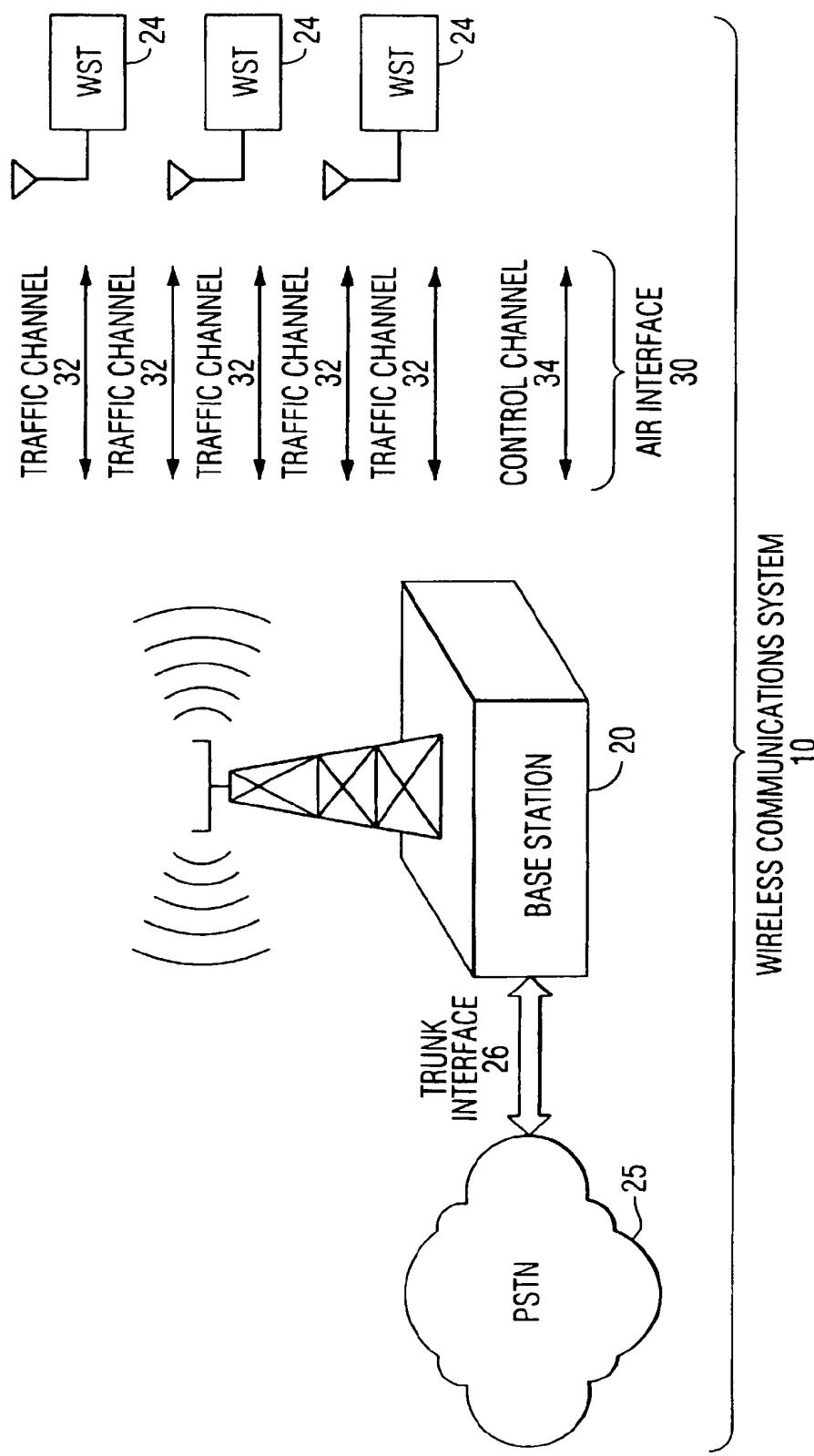


FIG. 1

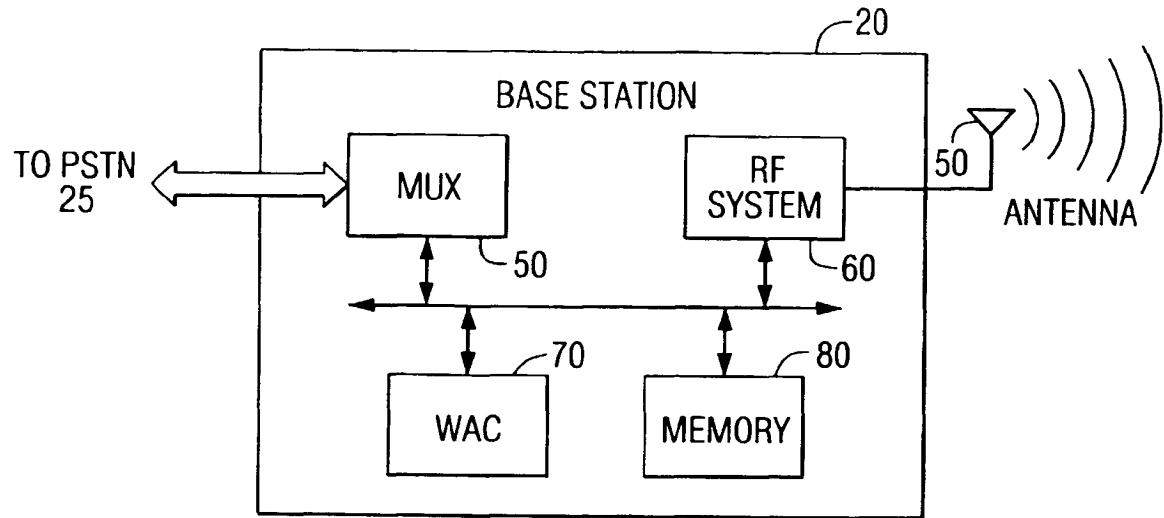


FIG. 2

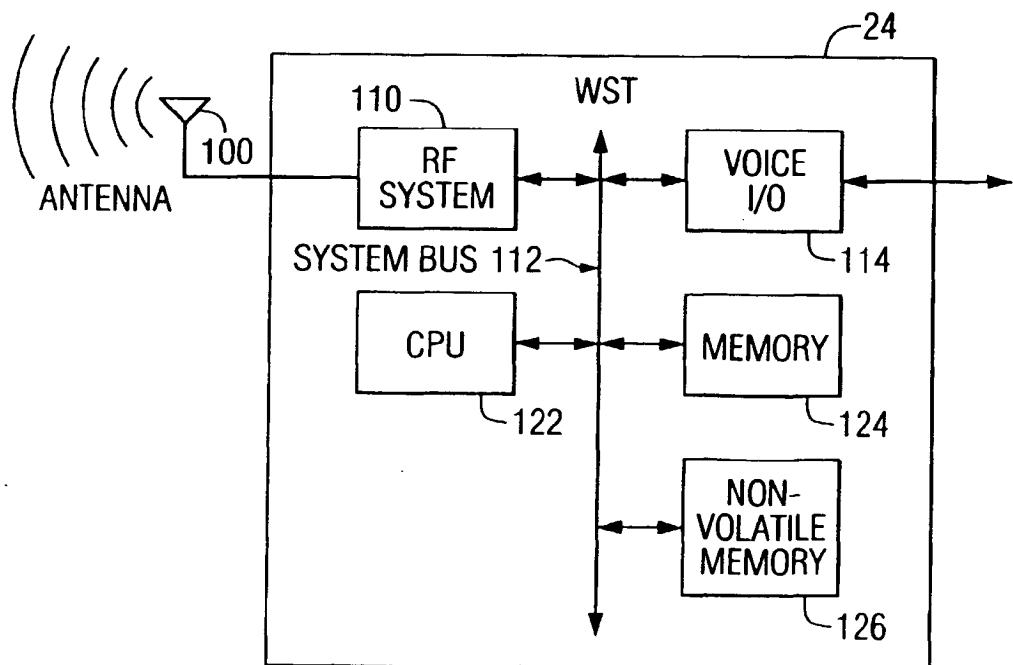


FIG. 3

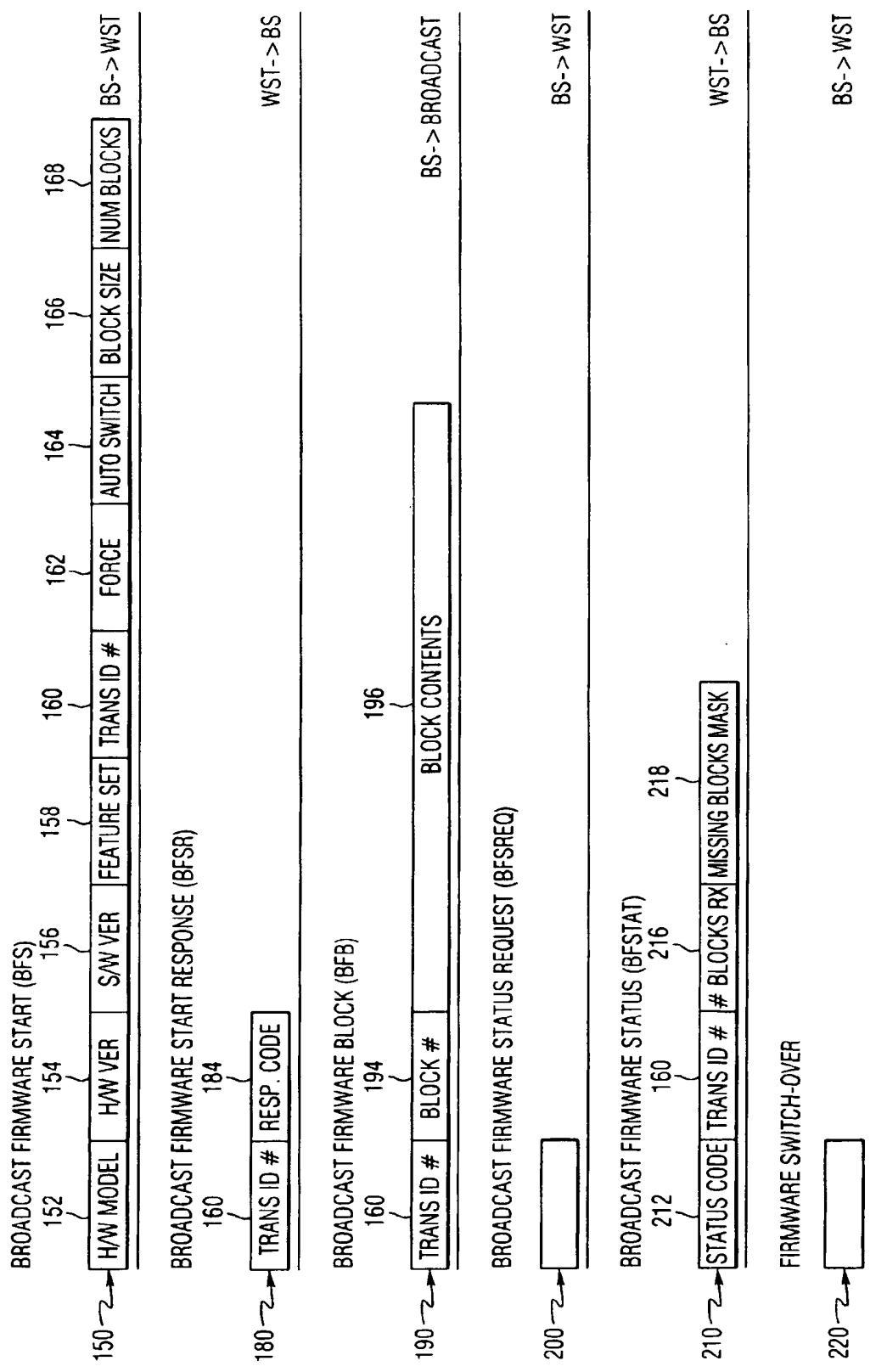


FIG. 4

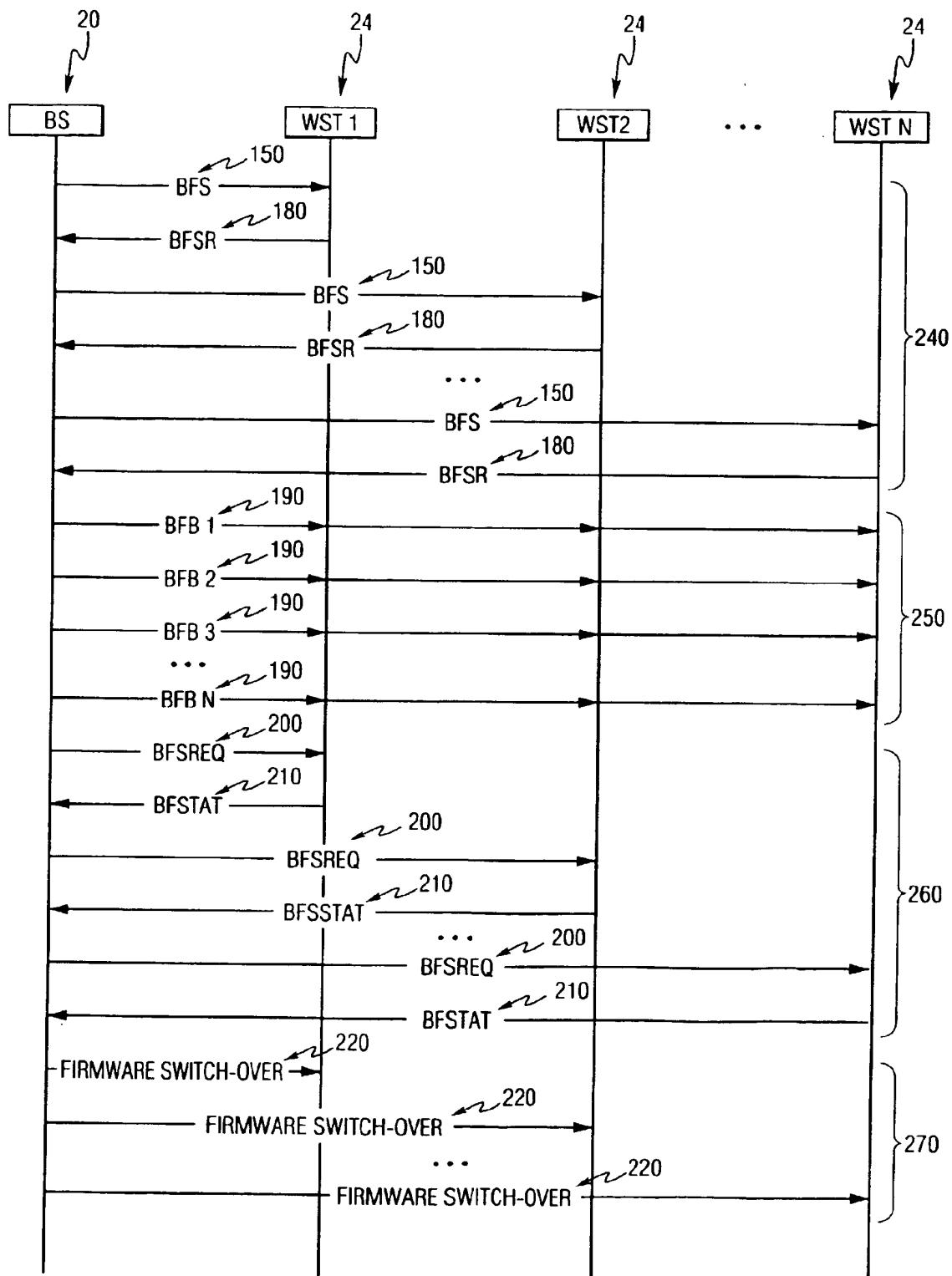


FIG. 5



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(54) Wireless subscriber terminal programming using a broadcast control channel

(57) The invention is a system for programming wireless subscriber terminals (WST's) using a broadcast channel of a wireless communication system. A control program, for controlling operation of the WST, is updated using a series of messages transmitted from a base station over a broadcast control channel to one or more WST's simultaneously. Each message in the series contains a segment of the control program, and the series of messages is interleaved with other control data on the broadcast control channel in order to avoid inter-

ference with other call activities. When a WST identifies a message as containing a control program segment, the WST stores the segment. Once a complete control program has been received, control of the WST can be transferred to the new control program. Receipt of the broadcast transmission is subject to interruption for a variety of reasons, e.g., a WST is powered off, a WST moves outside the range of a base station, other radio signals or noise interfere with the broadcast signal, or a call is received by a WST, which then transfers to a voice channel.

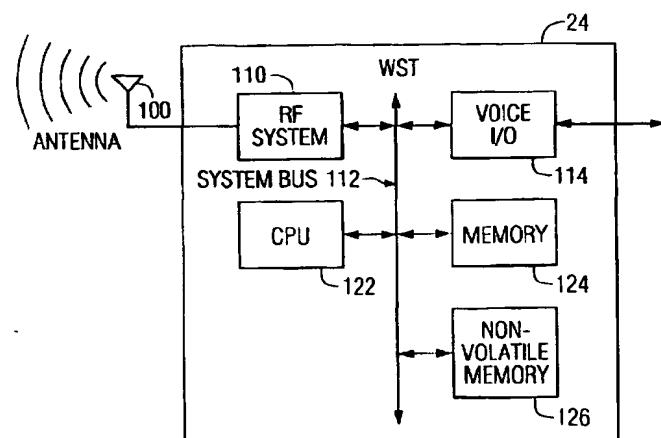


FIG. 3



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 00 40 1184

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<p>The present search report has been drawn up for all claims</p>			
Place of search THE HAGUE	Date of completion of the search 19 December 2000	Examiner Baas, G	
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	
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ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.

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